

General Council hears good news on CMA membership, MD Management

The CMA attracted more than 1000 new members in 1995, General Council delegates learned during the recent annual meeting, and ended the year with 45 299 members, up from 44 205 in 1994. At the same time, the medical profession's "population," which includes medical students, interns, residents and retired physicians, reached an all-time high of 74 992. Dr. Colin McMillan, the board chair, said the recruitment of medical students and young physicians remains "a CMA priority"; 43% of students now belong to the association.

General Council also learned that MD Management Ltd., the CMA's wholly owned financial subsidiary, has been enjoying steady growth. Assets under administration surpassed \$6.8 billion this summer, up from \$6.3 billion at the start of the year. The company reached the \$1-billion mark in 1985 and surpassed \$5 billion in 1993. The number of new accounts opened in the first half of 1996 is greater than predicted and revenues are 8% ahead of budget projections.

CMA to consult members on GST

Nothing raises the hackles of Canadian physicians like the goods and services tax, and General Council has decided unanimously that the CMA

should discuss with members ways of passing on costs related to the reviled 7% tax. Physicians remain the only professionals who have to absorb the entire cost of the GST as it relates to their practices, and Dr. Dan MacCarthy of Vancouver says something has to be done. "We've paid over a quarter billion dollars since it was introduced," said MacCarthy, "and physicians in the Maritimes are going to face an even worse situation because of harmonization of the GST and provincial sales taxes." The CMA has estimated that the tax costs physicians \$56 to \$57 million annually.

In his report to General Council, board chair Dr. Colin McMillan noted that the CMA has continued to lobby the federal government about the "discriminatory situation" physicians face over the GST. "A harmonized system will increase the discrimination," he warned.

No place like home for MUN graduates

MUNMED, the newsletter for Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine, is tracking the careers of Memorial graduates. A report in the July issue notes that 86 physicians — 42% of Memorial medical students from Newfoundland who graduated between 1976 and 1979 — have spent their entire careers in the province; 65%, or 106 physicians, had practised for at least a year in the province. The four classes included 164 Newfoundlanders. An earlier issue of *MUNMED* said that more than half of Newfoundlanders who

graduated from 1973 to 1975 had stayed in the province, with 56% serving in rural areas.

Male contraceptive one step closer

The World Health Organization is examining promising results from an international, 2-year clinical trial of a hormonal contraceptive for men. The method relies on hormone injections to reduce the concentration of sperm in semen to either very low or undetectable levels.

The average times taken to reach the required level of oligospermia or azospermia were 68 and 100 days respectively; when treatment was stopped, the average times taken for the men to return to pretreatment levels of sperm production were 112 and 201 days respectively. The overall effectiveness achieved in the trial was 98.6%, which is comparable to similar hormonal controls for women, such as oral contraceptives.

Licensing agreement signed

The University of Alberta and SYNSORB Biotech Inc., a Calgary-based biotechnology firm, have signed a licensing agreement for technology that can be used in the treatment of enteropathogenic *Escherichia coli* infections, one of the most common causes of diarrhea in infants. It was developed by Dr. Glen Armstrong and a research team at the U of A.